

Application No. 10/781,097  
Reply to Office Action of March 3, 2006

JUN 20 2006

**PROPOSED AMENDED CLAIMS – US PATENT APPLICATION NO. 10/781,097**

Below is a set of Proposed Amended Claims for U.S. Patent Application No. 10/781,097 in response to a final Office Action, dated March 3, 2006, wherein underlining indicates additions and double brackets indicate deletions. Applicant proposes to add the subject matter of claims 2 and 3 to independent claim 1, as follows:

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for processing lawn and garden organic debris comprising:

a fan housing having a wall with an opening for allowing air to pass therethrough, at least one protrusion extends outwardly from the wall;

a retainer plate surrounding a portion of the opening and coupled to the wall, the retainer plate being spaced from the wall to define a slot between the wall and the retainer plate;

at least first and second connectors extending outwardly from the wall, the at least first and second connectors and at least one protrusion circumscribing a perimeter, wherein the retainer plate is coupled to the wall by the at least first and second connectors; and

a hose having a nozzle at a first end and a flange at a second end, the flange being releasably positionable in the slot such that the opening and hose are in fluid communication and being rotatable with respect to the fan housing while coupled to the wall by the at least first and second connectors.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the retainer plate has a semi-circular shape.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the flange has a circular shape.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the connectors are a combination of threaded studs and threaded retainers.

7. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the threaded retainers are wing nuts.

8. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the threaded retainers are threaded hand knobs.

9. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the protrusion is a pin.

10. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 2 further comprising a third connector disposed along the perimeter, intermediate the first and second connectors and positioned generally opposite the at least one protrusion.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a safety interlock switch disposed on the fan housing wall, the safety switch being actuated when the flange is in the slot to allow the apparatus to be operational.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

a fan assembly mounted for rotation within the fan housing, including a fan impeller having a plurality of fan blades;

each of the plurality of fan blades having a base portion and a tip portion; the base portions extending generally radially from an axis of rotation of the fan impeller; and

the tip portions being inclined relative to the base portions in a direction opposite a direction of rotation of the fan impeller.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the tip portion is inclined relative to the base portion at an angle between 50 and 80 degrees.

14. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

    a fan assembly mounted for rotation within the fan housing, including a fan impeller having a plurality of fan blades, and

    a plurality of shredding blades connected to and projecting forwardly from the fan impeller toward an inlet defined by the opening in the fan housing wall.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein each of the plurality of shredding blades includes a tip portion having two intersecting angled edges.